DC
NO. 331
JAN.
50¢
ALL NEW!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BAT MAN
2 COMPLETE STORIES IN ONE ISSUE!
APARO
HIS NAME IS THE ELECTROUTIONER... AND HIS GAME IS DEATH!
C-465

THE SAGA OF JOHNNY WEST
JOHNNY WEST, WEARING HIS ACME BOOTS KEEPS AN EYE OUT FOR KIDS IN TROUBLE.
ONE DAY AFTER SCHOOL ...
LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR JOHNNY WEST...
SCRAM KID, I'M BORROWIN' YOUR HORSE!
GEE, JOHNNY WEST! I WISH I COULD STAND UP TO TROUBLE LIKE YOU DO.
YOU CAN, BY STANDIN' PROUD IN ACME BOOTS!
YOU BET. ACME'S MAKING THE GREAT WESTERN BOOTS.
WOW! ACME BOOTS.
THE NEXT DAY, IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY...
WOW... HOW DID YOU SCARE THAT BIG CREEP OFF?
THANKS, JOHNNY WEST...
ACME WINS AGAIN.
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ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE MURDERED BEFORE HIS EYES, BRUCE WAYNE HAS TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...
BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DIFFERENT, BATMAN! DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS! BUT NOW I SEE THE TRUTH! YOU'RE AS EVIL AS ALL THE REST OF THEM!
SO FEEL MY POWER, BATMAN! FEEL THE AWESOME POWER OF THE ELECTROCUTIONER--
--AND DIE!!
THE HIGH-VOLTAGE ELECTRIC CURRENT FROM HIS HAND... PARALYZING ME... SAPPING MY STRENGTH! GOT TO FIGHT BACK!
BECAUSE ONCE HE CLAMPS HIS OTHER HAND OVER MY FACE, ONCE HE COMPLETES THE DEADLY CIRCUIT--I'M DOOMED!
CLOSED CIRCUIT!

Plot by: MARV WOLFMAN / Dialogue by: MICHAEL FLEISHER / Art by: IRV NOVICK & FRANK McLAUGHLIN / Lettered by: BEN ODA / Colored by: ADRIENNE ROY / Edited by: PAUL LEVITZ

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THE SOMBRY DISTRICT IN LOWER GOTHAM. IT IS A PLACE OF WINOS AND CRUMBLING TENEMENTS, OF POVERTY--
--AND OF FEAR--!!
GOTTA GET AWAY! :GASP: GOTTA!
PLEASE! SOMEBODY! YA GOTTA LET ME IN! :SOB: YA GOTTA!
THE ANGUISHED CRIES BRING A FEW TENEMENT DWELLERS RUSHING TO THEIR WINDOWS, YET NOT ONE AMONG THEM MOVES TO LET THE MAN INSIDE...
AND SO HE TURNS AWAY FROM THE SHABBY, PEELING, FOX-LOCKED DOOR, AND KEEPS ON RUNNING--
--UNTIL FINALLY THERE IS NO PLACE LEFT TO RUN--
:GASP!:
NO PLACE LEFT TO RUN--
--AT ALL--!!
PLEASE! Y-YOU'RE MAKIN' A BIG MISTAKE! YOU'RE--
YAAAAAAA
THE AGONIZED SHRIEKING ENDS ABRUPTLY NOW, REPLACED BY THE HIDEOUS CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY AND THE ACRID AROMA OF BURNING FLESH...
ZAP!
AND A SHORT WHILE LATER...
FOR WHATEVER IT'S WORTH, I CAN I.D. THE BODY FOR YOU, COMMISSIONER!
THAT'S MAFIA HIT MAN SPIKE RAFFERTY, A LONGTIME RESIDENT OF DEATH ROW UNTIL HE WAS SUDDENLY SET FREE BY THE APPEALS COURT LAST WEEK ON A TECHNICALITY!
WELL, MAYBE THE STATE DIDN'T GET TO ELECTROCUTE RAFFERTY, BATMAN! BUT IT SURE LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE DID!

SEVERAL DAYS PASS UNEVENTFULLY. AND THEN LATE ONE EVENING, IN THE SPRAWLING SUBTERRANEAN SANCTUM KNOWN AS THE BATCAVE...
YOU'RE NOT GONNA LIKE THE STORY THEY'RE CARRYING IN THE LATE PAPER TONIGHT, BATMAN!
I'VE ALREADY SEEN IT, ROBIN!
AND YOU'RE RIGHT! I DON'T LIKE IT! IT TOOK ME SIX MONTHS OF HARD SLEUTHING TO NAIL MIKE CAINE--
--AND BY THE TIME I'D CAUGHT UP WITH HIM, HE'D ALREADY BRUTALLY MURDERED FIVE MEN ON A PERSONAL HIT LIST THAT INCLUDED A DOZEN OF GOTHAM'S MOST PROMINENT CITIZENS!
WHOCK
UNNGHHH!
IN MY ENTIRE CAREER, I NEVER MET A CRIMINAL WHO DESERVED TO PAY THE SUPREME PENALTY MORE THAN MIKE CAINE DID!
--TO BE ELECTROCUTED IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR AT GOTHAM STATE PENITENTIARY, AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON YOUR SOUL!
WELL, YOU AIN'T GONNA LIVE TO SEE THE SPARKS FLY, JUDGE BABY! MIKE CAINE'LL SEE TO THAT!
MIKE CAINE IS A REMORSELESS, COLD-BLOODED KILLER! YET NOW A HIGHER COURT'S BEEN COMPELLED TO RELEASE HIM ON A TECHNICALITY!
WHICH MEANS I'M BACK AT SQUARE ONE! I'VE GOT TO STOP CAINE BEFORE HE KILLS AGAIN!
BATMAN! WAIT! WE STILL HAVE PROBLEMS OF OUR OWN TO IRON OUT!
NOT NOW, ROBIN! OUR WORK COMES BEFORE OUR PERSONAL PROBLEMS, YOU KNOW THAT!
WHEN MIKE CAINE IS BACK BEHIND BARS, WE CAN SIT DOWN AND TALK ALL YOU WANT TO!
UNTIL THEN, I'M SORRY, BUT IT'LL HAVE TO WAIT!
3

A SHORT WHILE LATER, IN AN OPULENT MANSION SHELTERED BEHIND HIGH STONE WALLS IN GOTHAM'S WEALTHY RIVERDALE SECTION...
YEAH, YEAH, I'VE HEARD ABOUT HIM! THAT NUT THAT'S GOIN' AROUND FRYIN' ALL THESE GUYS THAT'VE MANAGED TO BEAT THEIR RAPS BY FINDIN' LOOPHOLES IN THE LAW! BUT SO WHAT?
I MEAN, LIKE EVEN A STRAY LADYBUG AIN'T GONNA PENETRATE THE SECURITY I GOT AROUND THIS PLACE, FREDDY BOY!
I MEAN LIKE I GOT BODYGUARDS--
--I GOT--
HUH--!? FREDDY?
HEY! WE BEEN CUT--
YOU--!!
JUSTICE MAY BE BLIND, CAINE--
--BUT I'M NOT!
YOU MAY HAVE SLIPPED THROUGH THE CRACKS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM THIS TIME, BUT I'LL BE WATCHING YOU, CAINE! AND SO HELP ME--
H-HEY! LET GO'A ME, YOU ROTTEN FREAK!
YOU AIN'T GOT NO RIGHT TO--
STOW IT, CAINE! AND TAKE SOME FREE ADVICE FROM ME WHILE YOU'RE STILL ALIVE TO HEAR IT!
YOU MAY NOT LIKE ME, CAINE! BUT THERE'S SOMEBODY ELSE OUT THERE LOOKING FOR YOU WHO MAKES ME LOOK LIKE REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM!
SO TAKE A FREE TIP, CAINE! GO CONFESS ONE OF YOUR OLD MURDERS AND TURN YOURSELF IN! YOU'LL GET A BETTER SHAKE FROM THE LAW THAN YOU'LL EVER GET FROM HIM!
HA! YOU CAN GO FLY A KITE! THAT ELECTRICITY FREAK DON'T SCARE ME--
--AND YOU--
OH MOTHER OF MARY...! NO!
4
CONTINUED ON 35¢ PAGE FOLLOWING

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IT'S A WACKY WORLD
WHATTAYA DO, DAD?/MOM?
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PROFESSOR RUTABAGA
PET PEEVES
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TURKEY OF THE WEEK

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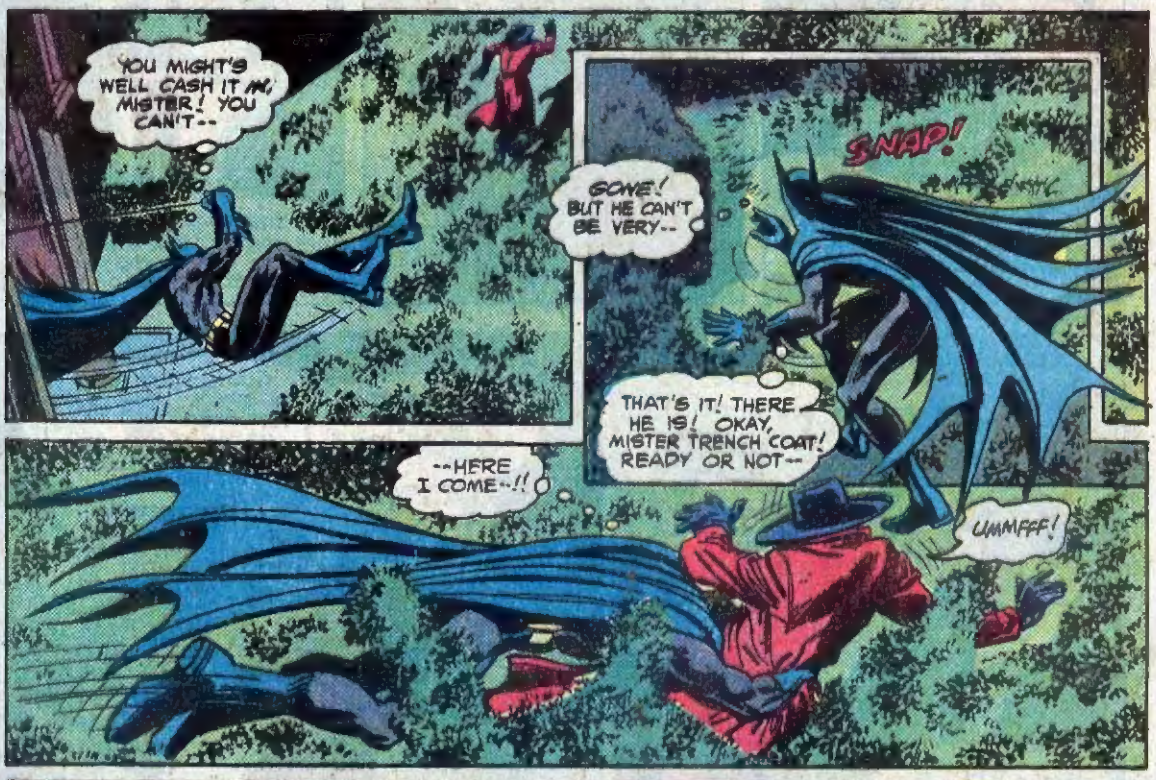
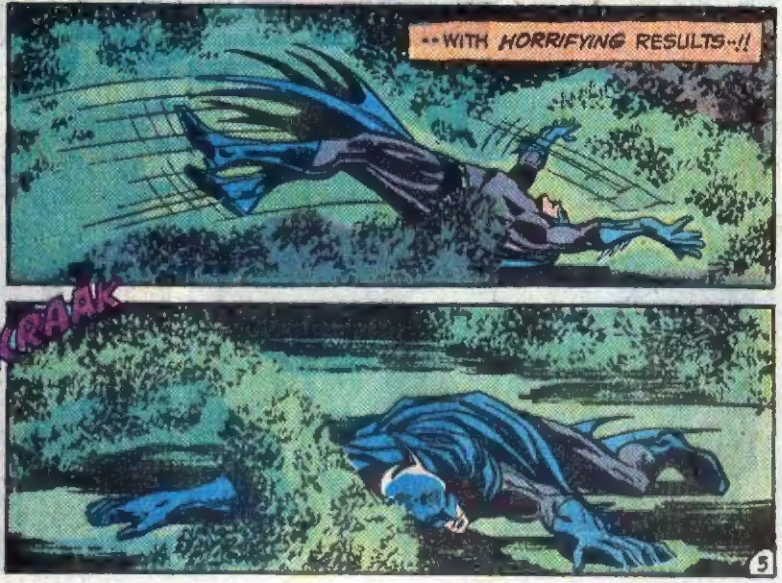
SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

YAAAAAA
GREAT SCOTT! THAT'S CAINE!
TOO LATE! I CAN'T SAY I'M GOING TO SHED A WHOLE LOT OF TEARS OVER CAINE, EITHER --
--BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M GOING TO WASTE ANY SYMPATHY ON THE LUNATIC WHO DID IT!


YOU MIGHT'S WELL CASH IT IN, MISTER! YOU CAN'T--
GONE! BUT HE CAN'T BE VERY--
SNAP!
THAT'S IT! THERE HE IS! OKAY, MISTER TRENCH COAT! READY OR NOT--
--HERE I COME--!!
UMMFFF!

BUT THEN, SUDDENLY BEFORE THE DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE CAN FOLLOW UP HIS ADVANTAGE, THE VILLAIN SLAMS A GLOVED HAND AGAINST THE BATMAN'S CHEST--
SSSS-SKRAAK


--WITH HORRIFYING RESULTS--!!

HOURS LATER, IN THE LAVISH PENTHOUSE SUITE ATOP THE TOWERING WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING...
YOU'VE SUSTAINED A NASTY ELECTRICAL WOUND, MASTER BRUCE--
--BUT THIS SHOULD HOLD YOU, AT LEAST UNTIL DR. DUNDEE CAN TAKE A LOOK AT IT!
DID YOU GET A LINE ON WHO THAT CHARACTER WAS, BRUCE?
NO, DICK, I DIDN'T! BUT WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING--
HE WHISPERED, "IT ISN'T RIGHT FOR US TO FIGHT LIKE THIS!" ALMOST AS IT--
UH, BRUCE! IF I COULD CHANGE THE SUBJECT FOR A MINUTE, I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT MY DECISION TO DROP OUT OF HUDSON!
I'LL TALK ABOUT IT WITH YOU ALL YOU WANT, DICK, BUT THERE'S NO WAY I CAN POSSIBLY APPROVE!
IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T THINK OF YOU AS AN ADULT, DICK! IT'S--
THAT'S JUST WHAT IT IS, BRUCE! YOU CAN'T GET OVER THINKING OF ME AS A KID, AS ROBIN, THE BOY WONDER!
WELL, I'M NOT A BOY WONDER ANYMORE, BRUCE! I'M A FULL-GROWN MAN, A DETECTIVE, JUST LIKE YOU!
FOR INSTANCE, I'VE BEEN CHECKING OUT THIS LUCIUS THING! TIMMY'S GANG DIDN'T BEAT UP ON LUCIUS! SOMEONE ELSE DID!
FINE, DICK! THAT'S A START! BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE LOOSE ENDS?
WHY EXACTLY WAS THAT GANG OF TEENAGERS TRYING TO DESTROY THE WAYNE FOUNDATION?*
*LAST ISSUE. --PAUL.
AND HOW DID THEY GET INTO THE BUILDING?
YOU WANT TO BE A DETECTIVE, DICK? FINE! BUT YOU'VE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS!

AND YOU'D LEARN ABOUT THEM A WHOLE LOT FASTER IF YOU'D STAY IN SCHOOL!
UH-OH! HERE HE COMES! I'VE JUST GOT TO GET THIS CONFIDENTIAL FILE TO MR. FALSTAFF--
--UNLESS I--
GOOD MORNING, CAROLINE! MY, BUT YOU'RE IN BRIGHT AND EARLY THIS MORNING!
UH, YES! YES, I AM, MR. WAYNE!
I HAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF WORK ON MY DESK, MR. WAYNE! I--IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, SIR, I'LL GET RIGHT TO IT!
WHEW! SOMEBODY SURE SEEMS TO BE SUFFERING FROM COFFEE NERVES THIS MORNING!
AND IN THE OUTER OFFICE...
YOU SEEM A LITTLE JITTERY THIS MORNING, MS. CROWN! ARE YOU OKAY?
YES! OF COURSE I AM! IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU, DICK?
YES, THERE IS! I'D LIKE YOU TO RUN A COMPUTER CHECK FOR ME ON ALL WAYNE ENTERPRISES HOLDINGS! THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT I'M TRYING TO FIND OUT!
WHILE AT THAT SELFSAME INSTANT, IN A DIMLY LIT ROOM ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE CITY...
SO DANE WHITNEY IS FREE, IS HE?
HAM NEWS
MOBSTER BEATS RAP
CRIME LEADER DANE WHITNEY RELEASED ON JUDICIAL FOUL-UP
THEN DANE WHITNEY MUST DIE!
WHILE NOT FAR AWAY...
I'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA WHO'S NEXT IN LINE FOR A VISIT FROM OUR ELECTRIC EXECUTIONER!
BUT I'VE GOT TIME YET! HE NEVER STRIKES THIS EARLY! AND THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT I'VE GOT TO DO FIRST!

AND SO, A SHORT WHILE LATER, IN A PRIVATE ROOM AT GOTHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL...
IT'S GOOD OF YOU TO COME SEE ME, BRUCE! I UNDERSTAND YOU PRESSED CHARGES AGAINST TIMMY FOR THAT BREAK-IN AT THE FOUNDATION!
I HAD TO, LUCIUS! THERE WAS A WHOLE GANG OF KIDS INVOLVED!
BRUCE, WHAT ON EARTH HAVE I DONE TO MAKE TIMMY BEHAVE THIS WAY! HOW HAVE I--
I DON'T KNOW, LUCIUS! BUT I WOULDN'T TORTURE MYSELF OVER IT! SOMETIMES ...SOMETIMES KIDS JUST DON'T SEEM TO KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR THEM!
BRUCE, BEFORE I FORGET! HOW IS THAT BANK MERGER GOING? BY NOW YOU MUST'VE FINISHED GOING OVER THOSE FACT SHEETS I LEFT FOR YOU!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I DON'T RECALL SEEING THOSE PAPERS CROSS MY DESK AT ALL!
I'LL POKE AROUND FOR THEM AS SOON AS I GET BACK TO THE OFFICE! MEANWHILE, LUCIUS, YOU TAKE CARE, HEAR?
I WILL, BRUCE! AND THANKS AGAIN--FOR EVERYTHING!
MOMENTS LATER, AS A SLEEK TURBO-POWERED VEHICLE FLASHES LIKE A METEOR THROUGH GOTHAM'S NIGHT-ENSHROUDED STREETS...
HMMM! THAT MERGER LUCIUS MENTIONED IS A HIGH-PRIORITY TRANSACTION! IF HE REALLY DID LEAVE ME THOSE PAPERS, I'D BETTER MAKE SURE I FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEM!
WHILE AT THAT SAME MOMENT, SEVERAL MILES AWAY...
THERE GOES RON, THE LEADER OF THAT TEEN-AGE GANG THAT LUCIUS'S SON TIMMY HAS GOTTEN HIMSELF MIXED UP WITH!
IT'LL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF OLD RON IS RUNNING THAT TEEN GANG ON HIS OWN--
8

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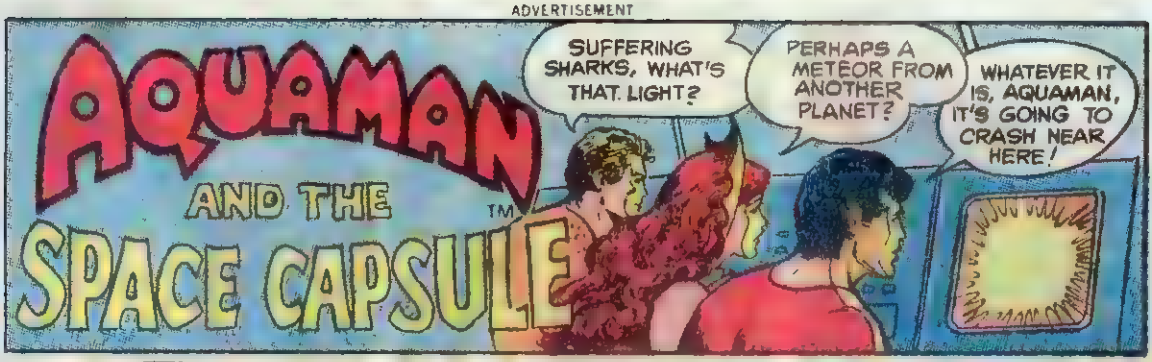
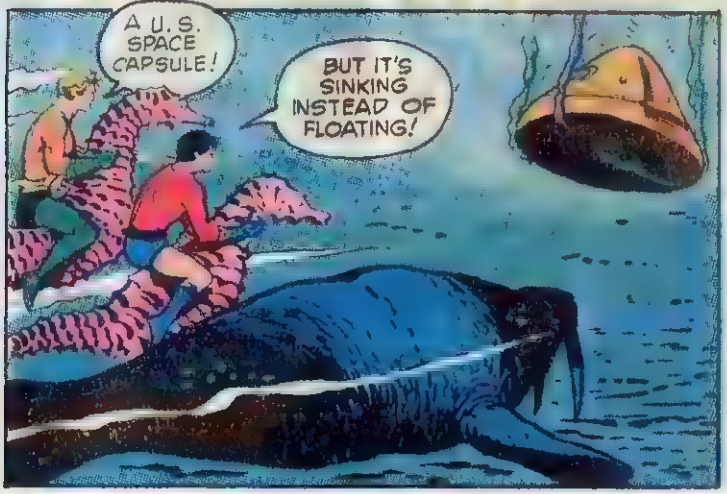

AQUAMAN
AND THE
SPACE CAPSULE
SUFFERING SHARKS, WHAT'S THAT LIGHT?
PERHAPS A METEOR FROM ANOTHER PLANET?
WHATEVER IT IS, AQUAMAN, IT'S GOING TO CRASH NEAR HERE!



WE LIVE BENEATH THE SEAS OF YOUR OWN PLANET--EARTH.
WE CAN PROVE IT --LOOK!
HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES! REAL FRUIT FILLING. APPLE. AND CHERRY-- MY FAVORITE.
AND THE LIGHT, TENDER CRUST I LIKE SO MUCH.

OUTER SPACE HAD A LOT OF INTERESTING THINGS TO SEE...
BUT ONLY EARTH HAS HOSTESS FRUIT PIES TO EAT.
CHERRY
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® FRUIT PIES

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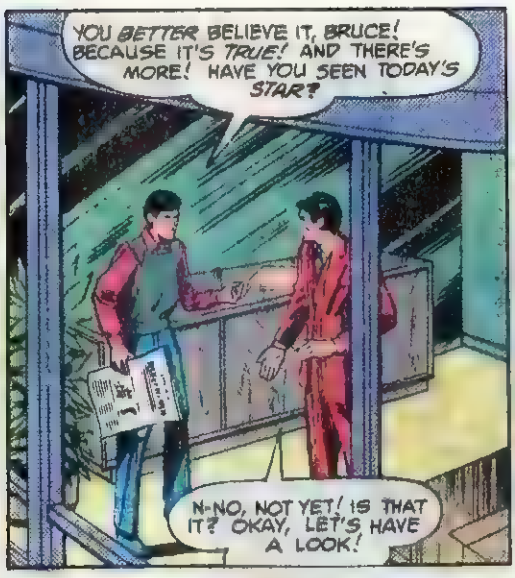
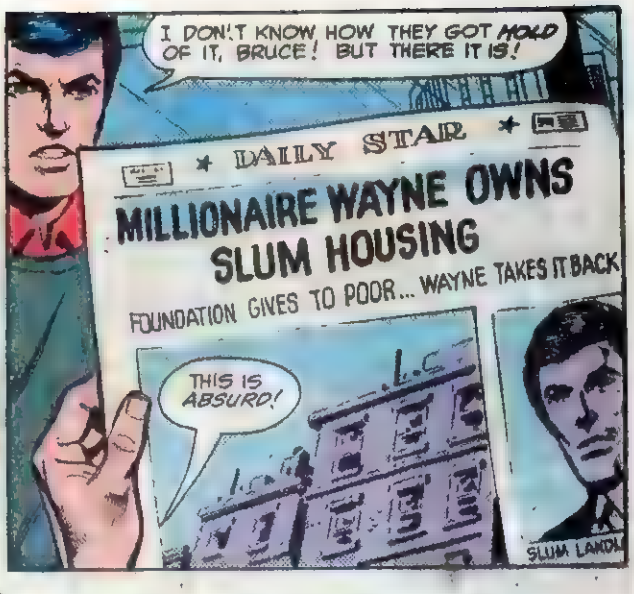
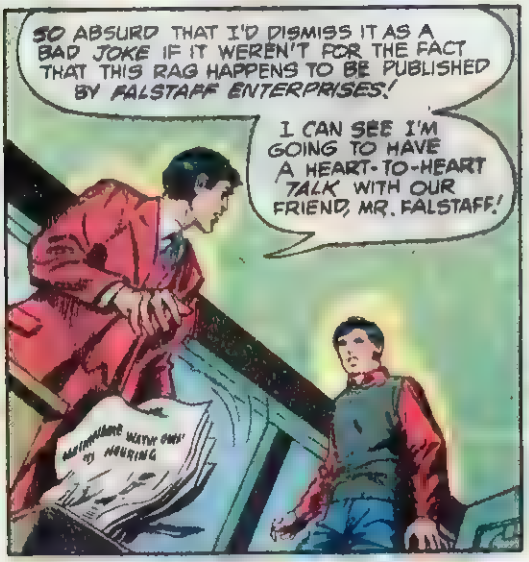
--OR WHETHER HE'S BEEN TAKING ORDERS FROM SOMEONE HIGHER--
WHA--!? GOOD GRIEF! THOSE INITIALS OVER THE ARCHWAY! I KNOW THIS BUILDING! IT'S--
OH WOW! JUST WAIT'LL BATMAN HEARS ABOUT THIS!
SOMETIME LATER, IN A PLUSH PRIVATE SCREENING ROOM IN DOWNTOWN GOTHAM...
YOU CHICKS'RE GONNA JUST GO WILD OVER THIS NEW FILM I'M GONNA SHOW YOU! JUST--
THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT YOUR BURBLING LADY FRIENDS ARE GOING TO WITNESS HERE TONIGHT, DANE WHITNEY--
HUNH--!?!
--IS THE GRISLY SPECTACLE OF YOUR PAINFUL TRANSFORMATION INTO A SCORCHED AND SMOULDERING CORPSE!
:CHOKE:
HELP!
YOU RANG, WHITNEY?
KA-WHAP
GNNGHHH!
EEEEK! HIS HANDS! THEY'RE CRACKLING WITH ELECTRICITY!
YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT, LADY!
WHICH IS WHY I INTEND TO PUT THIS CREEP AWAY FOR KEEPS--
OOOFF!
KRAK
--BEFORE HE GETS THE CHANCE TO CLAMP THOSE ELECTRIFIED MITTS ON ME!

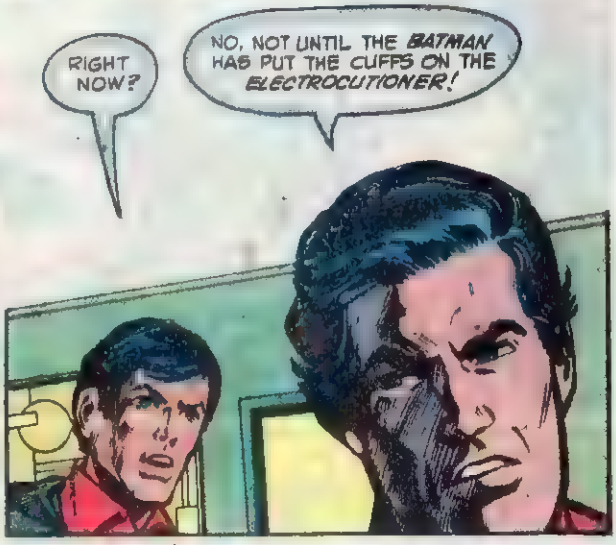
BUT IN THE NEXT BREATH-STOPPING INSTANT...
WHO--?
WHO AM I, BATMAN? I AM THE ELECTROCUTIONER!
AS FOR MY TRENCH COAT, YOU'RE MORE THAN WELCOME TO KEEP IT!
IT CAN SERVE AS A SHROUD FOR YOU AFTER I'VE DESTROYED YOU!
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO COME TO THIS, BATMAN! AFTER ALL, WE'RE ON THE SAME--
YOU KNOW SOMETHING, ELECTROCUTIONER? YOU TALK TOO MUCH!
UNNGHH!
KRAK
HE'S TOUGH! TOUGHER THAN I EVER EXPECTED! I'M NOT READY FOR AN ALL-OUT FIGHT WITH HIM!
AT LEAST, NOT YET!
GONE--!!
10

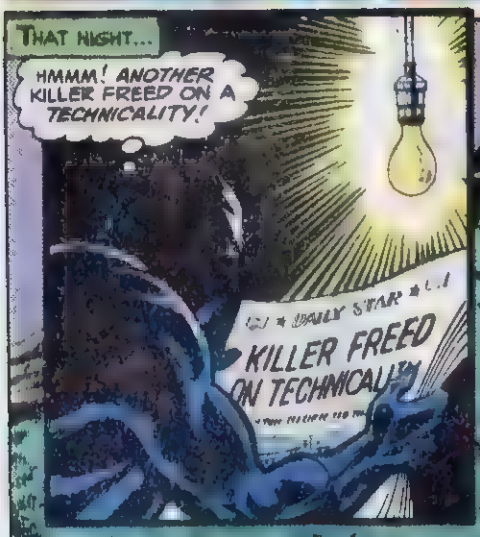
-YOU'RE SAFE FOR NOW, WHITNEY! BUT YOU WON'T BE SAFE FOR LONG, BELIEVE ME! WHOEVER THAT MANIAC WAS, HE'LL BE BACK! YOU CAN COUNT ON IT!
PLEASE, BATS! Y-YOU GOTTA HELP ME!
YOU GOTTA AT LEAST HIDE ME, PROTECT ME--
STOP SNIVELING, WHITNEY! I'LL NAIL THE ELECTROCUTIONER BEFORE HE ZAPS YOU! JUST DON'T GET THE IDEA THAT I'M DOING IT FOR YOU!
THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
GOT A MINUTE FOR ME, BRUCE?
SURE, DICK! COME ON IN! I JUST WISH I WERE IN A BETTER MOOD, THAT'S ALL!
I MEAN, BLAST IT, DICK, JUST LOOK AT THESE PAPERS! FOUR MAJOR BIDS! EVERY ONE OF THEM ON A MAJOR PROJECT! AND [redacted] FALSTAFF'S UNDERBID US ON EVERY ONE OF THEM!
IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! FALSTAFF'S OUTFIT WILL TAKE A BATH UNDERCUTTING US ON THESE BIDS! WHY ON EARTH WOULD HE--
SPEAKING OF FALSTAFF, BRUCE, LISTEN TO THIS!
I FOLLOWED RON LAST NIGHT-- STRAIGHT TO FALSTAFF'S HEADQUARTERS! AND REMEMBER HOW RON ACCUSED YOU RECENTLY OF BEING A SLUMLORD?
OF COURSE I REMEMBER! IT WAS A PREPOSTEROUS CHARGE! WHAT OF IT?
NOT SO PREPOSTEROUS, BRUCE! I'VE JUST FINISHED RUNNING A COMPUTER CHECK OF ALL WAYNE HOLDINGS! JUST SIX MONTHS AGO, YOU ACQUIRED A DOZEN TENEMENT BUILDINGS IN--
WHAT!? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
11

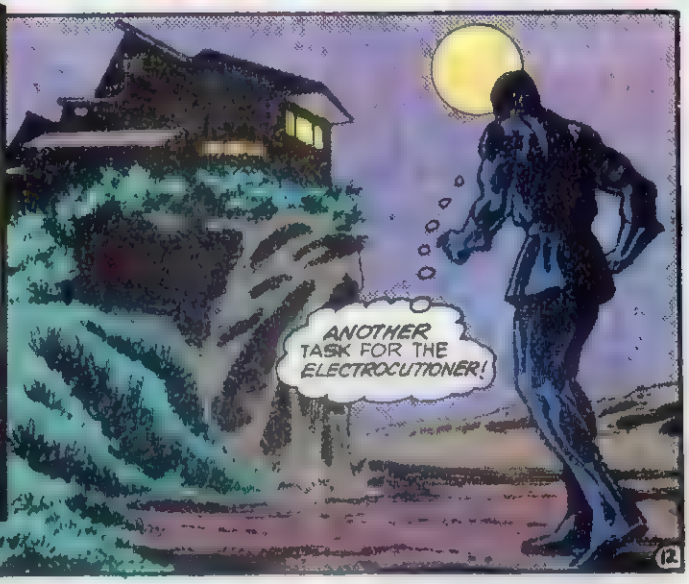

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, BRUCE! BECAUSE IT'S TRUE! AND THERE'S MORE! HAVE YOU SEEN TODAY'S STAR?
N-NO, NOT YET! IS THAT IT? OKAY, LET'S HAVE A LOOK!


I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY GOT HOLD OF IT, BRUCE! BUT THERE IT IS!
DAILY STAR
MILLIONAIRE WAYNE OWNS SLUM HOUSING
FOUNDATION GIVES TO POOR... WAYNE TAKES IT BACK
THIS IS ABSURD!
SLUM LAND!


SO ABSURD THAT I'D DISMISS IT AS A BAD JOKE IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE FACT THAT THIS RAG HAPPENS TO BE PUBLISHED BY FALSTAFF ENTERPRISES!
I CAN SEE I'M GOING TO HAVE A HEART-TO-HEART TALK WITH OUR FRIEND, MR. FALSTAFF!


RIGHT NOW?
NO, NOT UNTIL THE BATMAN HAS PUT THE CUFFS ON THE ELECTROCUTIONER!


THAT NIGHT...
HMMM! ANOTHER KILLER FREED ON A TECHNICALITY!
DAILY STAR
KILLER FREED ON TECHNICALITY


ANOTHER TASK FOR THE ELECTROCUTIONER!

INSIDE THE PICTURESQUE HILLTOP HOME...
I-I DON'T LIKE IT, I TELL YA, THIS ELECTROCUTIONER CRACKPOT STILL BEIN' ON THE LOOSE! I MEAN AFTER ALL--
--IT AIN'T MY FAULT THE COURT RULED MOST OF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST ME INADMISSIBLE AND TURNED ME LOOSE! ALL IT--
WHAM!
G-GOOD GRAVY! SAVE ME! PLEASE!
DON'T WORRY, SAMSON! I'LL SAVE YOU!
THIS TIME OUR FRIEND THE ELECTROCUTIONER IS GOING TO GET HIMSELF SHORT-CIRCUITED RIGHT INTO A PRISON-CELL!
DON'T COUNT ON IT, BATMAN!
BECAUSE THIS TIME I CAME PREPARED TO HAVE IT OUT WITH YOU, BATMAN! ONCE I GET MY HANDS--
TELL ME, ELECTROCUTIONER, WHAT IS IT WITH GUYS LIKE YOU--
WHA--!?
--THAT THEY GO OUT AND BUY THEMSELVES A SNAPPY-LOOKING COSTUME, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY THINK THEY'RE HOT STUFF!
UNNGHH!
KA-WHAM
RRIP!
3
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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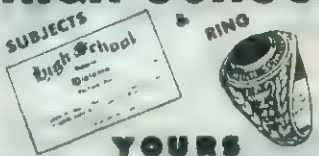
MMMMPH!
HA HA! LOOKS LIKE IT'S CURTAINS FOR YOU, BATMAN!
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO END LIKE THIS! I DIDN'T WANT TO, KILL YOU!
AAAHHH!
AFTER ALL, WE'RE TWO OF A KIND, YOU AND I! WE'RE BOTH DEDICATED TO RIDDING THE WORLD OF THE HUMAN PARASITES--
--THAT PREY ON--
ME? ON YOUR SIDE?
WHAK
ON THE SIDE OF A SADISTIC, BLOODTHIRSTY, SELF-APPOINTED EXECUTIONER? ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?
MHROGNH
GNNNGHH!
THEY'LL BE MAKING SNOWMEN IN HELL BEFORE I'M EVER ON YOUR SIDE, MISTER!
KPOW
UNNHHH!
AND DON'T YOU EVER FORGET IT!!
KA-WHACK
UNGGHH!
14

MERCY! PLEASE! NO MORE! I-I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
JUST LET ME--
JUST LET ME DESTROY YOU, YOU OVER-TRUSTING FOOL!!
ZZUT!
GHAAA!
THE MIND-STUNNING ELECTRIC SURGE SENDS THE BATMAN HURTLING ACROSS THE ROOM, PAROXYSMS OF UNENDURABLE AGONY WRACKING HIS MIGHTY FRAME ...
AND IN THE NEXT NERVE-SHATTERING INSTANT--
YOUR END IS AT HAND, BATMAN! ONCE I COMPLETE THE CIRCUIT WITH MY FREE HAND TO YOUR FACE-- IN THAT INSTANT YOUR LIFE WILL BE FORFEIT!
NEVER FELT SUCH... PAIN...! GOT TO... FIGHT IT!
WITH EVERY NERVE-ENDING IN HIS BODY TORN BY SOUL-NUMBING PAIN, BATMAN NEVERTHELESS MANAGES TO SUMMON FORTH HIS LAST REMAINING VESTIGE OF COURAGE AND STRENGTH--
WHOMP
KERASH!
15

AND THEN...
THANK HEAVENS! I-I'M SAFE! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS--
ZZZZZZT!
HUH!? OH NO! THIS RAILING! I-IT'S METAL!
BY HOLDING ON WITH BOTH HANDS, I'M COMPLETING THE CIRCUIT... SENDING THE ELECTRICITY COURSING BACK INTO MY OWN BODY!
BATMAN! BY ALL THAT'S HOLY! HELP ME! AYEE!
B-BARELY CAN MOVE-- BUT I'LL--
NO! HE'S GONE ALREADY!
YYYYAAAAA
SPLASH
"IT'S OVER," MUSES THE BATMAN GRIMLY, AS HE TURNS FROM THE WINDOW AND STRIDES SILENTLY TOWARD THE DOOR.
OVER? WELL, PERHAPS FOR A TIME, BUT WHETHER IT IS REALLY OVER FOR ALL TIME, WHAT MAN AMONG US CAN TRULY SAY...?
16

AND A SHORT WHILE LATER, BACK AT THE PENTHOUSE...
I'M GLAD YOU'RE BACK, BRUCE! BECAUSE SOMEONE'S GOT TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT THIS!
A-ABOUT WHAT, DICK?
TALIA--!!
RECENTLY, BATMAN, YOU PROMISED THAT IF EVER I NEEDED A FAVOR, YOU WOULD HELP ME! NOW THAT TIME HAS COME!
EVER SINCE YOU SLEW MY FATHER, I HAVE BEEN WITHOUT A RESIDENCE! WITH YOUR PERMISSION, BATMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO STAY HERE!
TELL HER NO, BRUCE! TELL HER SHE CAN'T STAY!
LOOK HERE, SON! THIS IS--
OH WOW! FORGET IT! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR FACE ALREADY! YOU'RE GOING TO SAY YES TO HER, AREN'T YOU? YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO LET HER STAY HERE!
WELL, THEN I'LL SAY GOODBYE NOW, BRUCE! BECAUSE IF YOUR CROOKED GIRLFRIEND STAYS, THEN I'M LEAVING!
YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT LIFE, YOUNGSTER! A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE, AND ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS!
I THINK GOING BACK TO COLLEGE WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE FOR YOU TO START!
UH-UH! THIS TIME YOU'VE GOT IT BACKWARDS, FRIEND! I DON'T HAVE AN AWFUL LOT TO LEARN!
BUT YOU DO! GOODBYE--!!
SLAM!
END
NEXT ISSUE: BEGINNING -- THE LAZARUS AFFAIR!
ON SALE NOVEMBER 13!

HIGH SCHOOL



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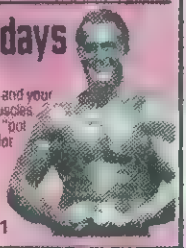

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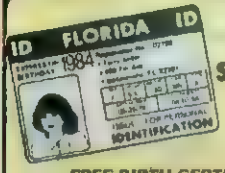

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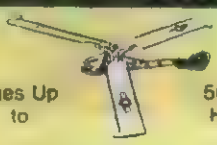

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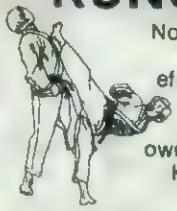

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AL NELSON'S A GOOD COP. HE KNOWS TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED. BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS BEYOND EVEN HIS ABILITY TO PREDICT--AND ONE OF THEM IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN!
WHA--??
GOOD REFLEXES, AL... BUT YOU CAN HOLSTER IT AGAIN!
BATMAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
CAME TO ASK A FAVOR, AL. I NEED TO BORROW SOMETHING VERY NEAR AND DEAR TO YOU...
... YOUR FACE!
I NEED TO BE YOU TONIGHT, AND NO ONE MUST KNOW IT--
--ESPECIALLY NOT COMMISSIONER GORDON!
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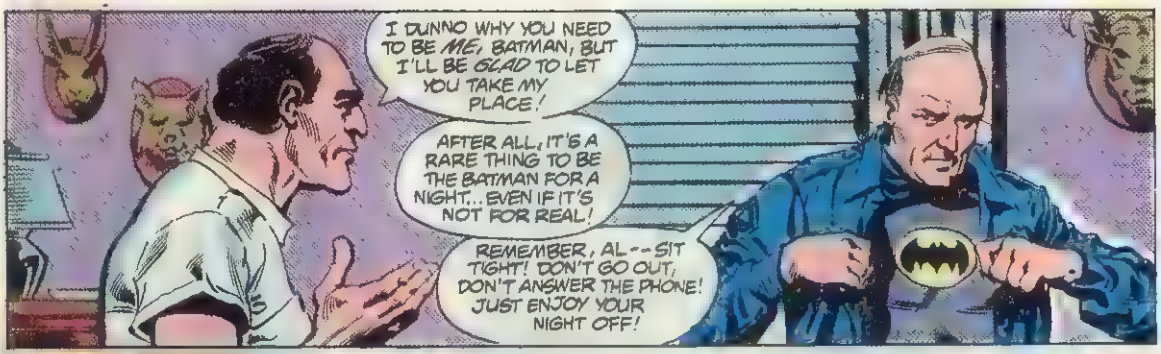
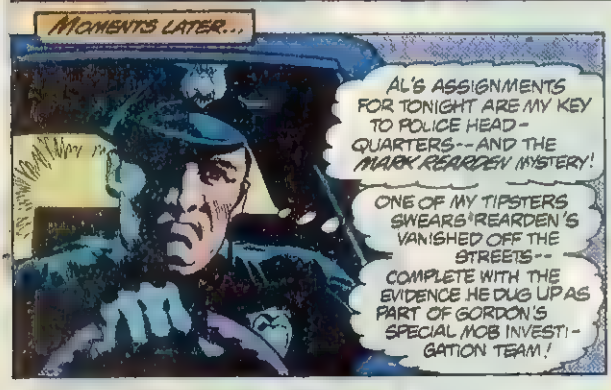
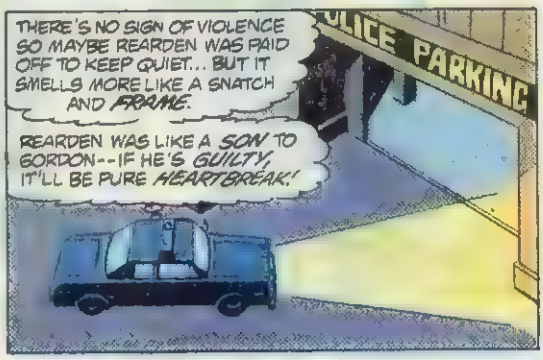
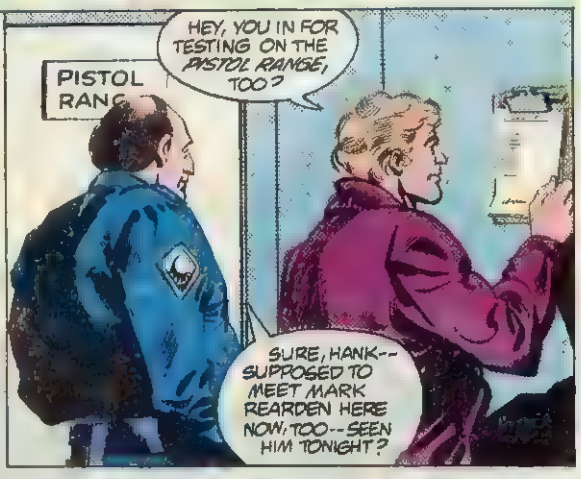
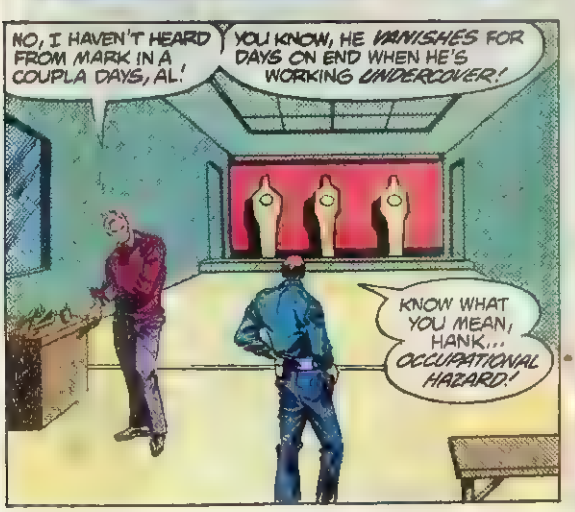

I DUNNO WHY YOU NEED TO BE ME, BATMAN, BUT I'LL BE GLAD TO LET YOU TAKE MY PLACE!
AFTER ALL, IT'S A RARE THING TO BE THE BATMAN FOR A NIGHT... EVEN IF IT'S NOT FOR REAL!
REMEMBER, AL--SIT TIGHT! DON'T GO OUT, DON'T ANSWER THE PHONE! JUST ENJOY YOUR NIGHT OFF!

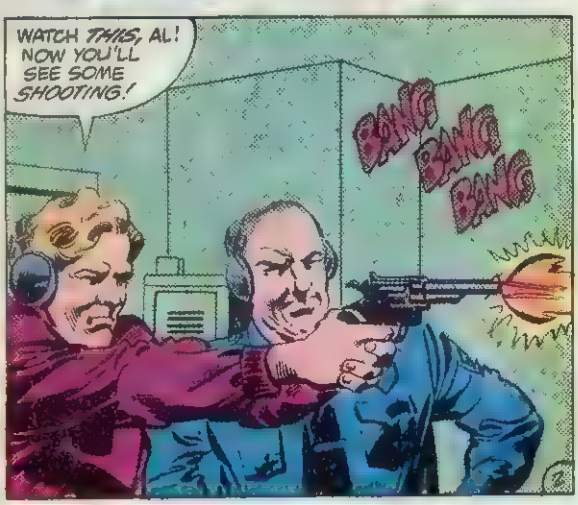

MOMENTS LATER...
AL'S ASSIGNMENTS FOR TONIGHT ARE MY KEY TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS--AND THE MARK REARDEN MYSTERY!
ONE OF MY TIPSTERS SWEARS REARDEN'S VANISHED OFF THE STREETS--COMPLETE WITH THE EVIDENCE HE DUG UP AS PART OF GORDON'S SPECIAL MOB INVESTIGATION TEAM!


THERE'S NO SIGN OF VIOLENCE SO MAYBE REARDEN WAS PAID OFF TO KEEP QUIET... BUT IT SMELLS MORE LIKE A SNATCH AND FRAME.
REARDEN WAS LIKE A SON TO GORDON--IF HE'S GUILTY, IT'LL BE PURE HEARTBREAK!
POLICE PARKING

IF IT'S A FRAME, IT'S GOT TO BE FROM INSIDE THE SQUAD--MAYBE EVEN HANK SAMUELS--REARDEN'S SECOND-IN-COMMAND!
HIYA, HANK--HOW'S IT GOING?
NOT BAD, AL!


PISTOL RANGE
HEY, YOU IN FOR TESTING ON THE PISTOL RANGE, TOO?
SURE, HANK--SUPPOSED TO MEET MARK REARDEN HERE NOW, TOO--SEEN HIM TONIGHT?


NO, I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM MARK IN A COUPLA DAYS, AL!
YOU KNOW, HE VANISHES FOR DAYS ON END WHEN HE'S WORKING UNDERCOVER!
KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, HANK... OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD!


WATCH THIS, AL! NOW YOU'LL SEE SOME SHOOTING!
BANG BANG BANG

ER... SIGHTS MUST BE A LITTLE OFF... I'M A BETTER SHOT THAN THAT...
HERE, AL-- YOU TRY IT!
FOR A LONG MOMENT, THE DISGUISED DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE LOOKS AT THE FIREARM... AND EVEN HIS POWERFUL FRAME SEEMS TO SHUDDER...
...WELL AWARE THAT THIS SIMPLE WEAPON MAY SHATTER HIS COVER!
FOR NO DISGUISE CAN HIDE THE BATMAN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL INABILITY TO FIRE A GUN-- UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU YOUNG GUYS, HANK-- ALL YOU KNOW ARE GUNS--
THUNK
--A NIGHTSTICK CAN TAKE OUT A GUY JUST AS EASILY AND HE'S STILL ALIVE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS!
SAVES BULLETS AND PAPERWORK, TOO!
NICE "SHOOTING," AL! YOU CAN HUNT WITH MORE THAN JUST A GUN!
HELLO, FRANK-- HEARD FROM REARDEN, OUR FEARLESS LEADER, LATELY?
FRANK TRASK, MUST BE THE THIRD MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE INVESTIGATION TEAM!
NOT A WORD FROM OUR PRIMA DONNA BOSS, HANK! ALL WE DO IS COOL OUR HEELS WHILE HE'S OUT PLAYING LONE WOLF!
BUT IF I HEADED THIS TASK FORCE-- THEN WE'D BE DOING SOMETHING, NOT SITTING ON OUR HANDS!
THIS IS COMMISSIONER GORDON-- ALL POLICE OFFICERS REPORT TO THE SQUAD ROOM IN FIVE MINUTES!
BLAST! MUST BE TIME FOR GORDON'S STOCK "SPEECH TO THE TROOPS"! JUST WHAT I DIDN'T NEED--A WASTED HOUR!
3

THESE TWO ARE MOST LIKELY SUSPECTS IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO REARDEN, BUT THEY BOTH SEEM CLEAN!
KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUDDY.. BUT MARK MAY SURPRISE US ALL -- YOU WATCH!
HAVE TO KEEP MY EYE ON BOTH OF THEM!
AND FOR THE NEXT HOUR...
THESE ARE ALL WAYS YOU CAN TALK ATTEMPTED JUMPERS OUT OF KILLING THEMSELVES, MEN. ANY QUESTIONS?
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, GORDON CAN STILL SURPRISE ME! I NEVER HEARD OF TWO OF THOSE TRICKS--
--AND I'VE READ EVERY WORD THAT'S EVER BEEN WRITTEN ON THE SUBJECT!
AND AFTER THE ASSEMBLY IS OVER...
TRASK, SAMUELS... HAVE EITHER OF YOU MEN HEARD FROM MARK REARDEN? HE'S BEEN OUT OF CONTACT FOR 48 HOURS NOW!
HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD, COMMISSIONER!
ME NEITHER! REARDEN'S JUST LOOKING FOR GLORY! HE DOESN'T BOTHER TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US!
HMMM, THAT'S NOT LIKE MARK... BUT THERE'S NO SENSE BEING A MOTHER HEN!
YOU'LL PROBABLY BE GONE BY THEN, THOUGH, AL-- VACATION COMING UP, RIGHT? UP FOR SOME HUNTING--MAYBE ADD A MOOSE TO YOUR TROPHIES?
YOU BET, COMMISSIONER-- SEASON OPENS UPSTATE PRETTY SOON!
NO PLACE FOR HUNTING LIKE THE MOUNTAINS-- HOPE YOU DON'T LET YOUR LODGE UP THERE GO TO WASTE, SIR!
ER, NO... I'LL TRY NOT TO... AL!
HMMM... FUNNY! I NEVER MENTION MY LODGE TO ANYONE ON THE FORCE-- IT'S THE ONLY PLACE I CAN REALLY BE ALONE!
ONLY THREE PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT IT... MYSELF, MY DAUGHTER BARBARA...
4
CONTINUE ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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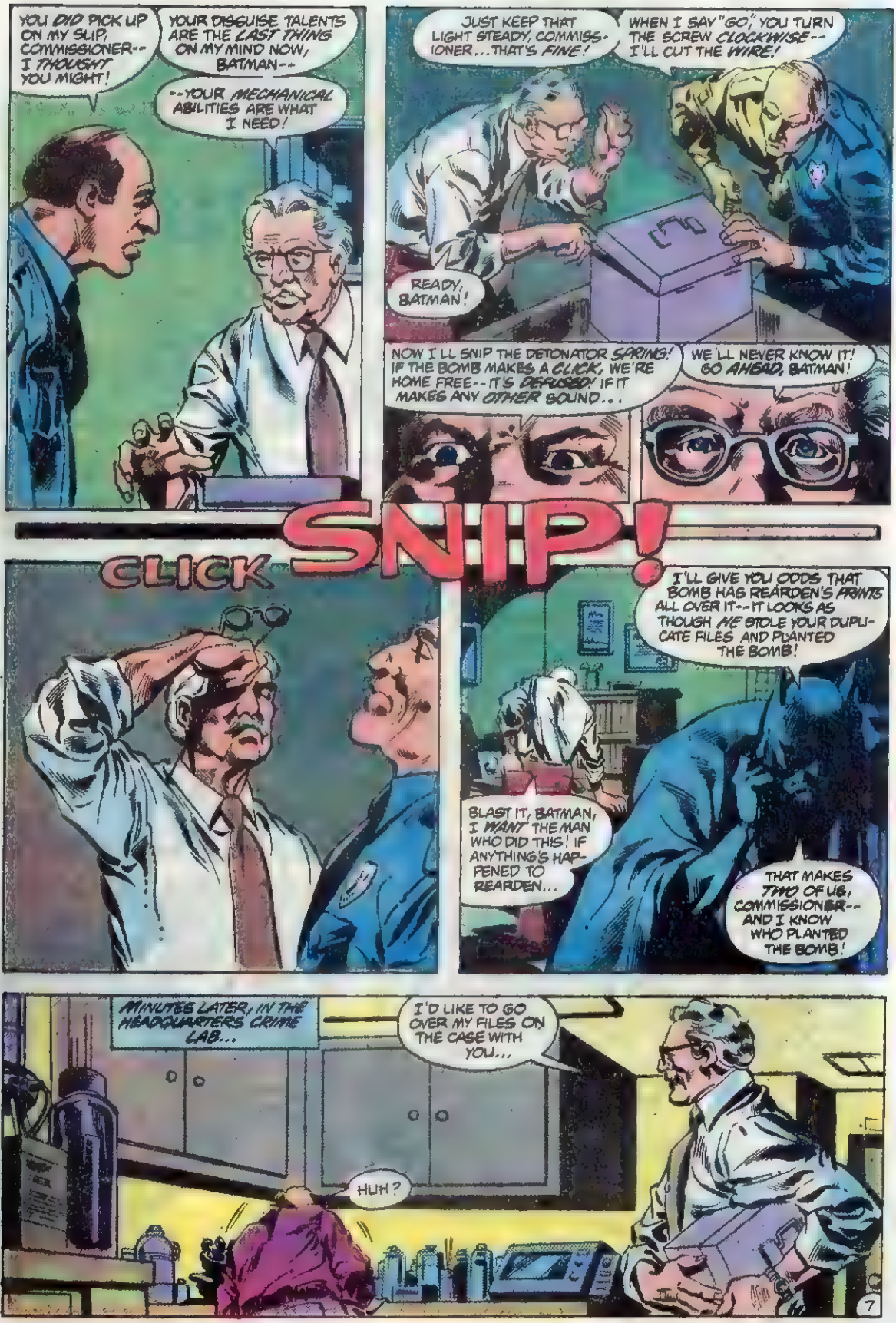
...AND BATMAN! IT MUST BE HIM! BUT WHY WOULD BATMAN SHOW UP DISGUISED AS NELSON AND NOT CLUE ME IN?
HE WAS WITH SAMUELS AND TRASK--MUST BE THE TASK FORCE HE'S INTERESTED IN!
GORDON
I'D BETTER GIVE THE DUPLICATE FILES IN MY OFFICE ANOTHER GOING OVER--SEE IF I CAN SPOT BATMAN'S REASON FOR BEING HERE!
MAYBE I CAN BE OF SOME HELP TO BATMAN--WHETHER HE WANTS HELP OR NOT!
AND JUST DOWN THE HALL...
CUSTODIAN
NELSON MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT GORDON'S LODGE ...AND BY THAT GLEAM IN HIS EYE, I THINK HE SAW THROUGH ME--
MARK REARDEN'S FILES ARE MY NEXT STOP, SO I'LL COMBINE THE TWO GOALS: GET OUT OF AL-NELSON'S LIFE--
--AND BECOME THE MAN NO ONE WILL QUESTION--THE JANITOR!
A LITTLE MORE WHITE IN THE HAIR, LOTS OF WRINKLES...
...AND I'M ALL SET TO CLEAN UP.. AS ROBIN WOULD SAY!
REARDEN'S OFFICE... THE REAL JANITOR TOOK HIS KEY WITH HIM...
M. REARDEN
...BUT THESE LOCKS ARE SO OLD THAT...
...I COULD PICK THEM WITH MY TEETH!
5

AND THE LOCKS OF THOSE FILES LOOK LIKE EVEN LESS TROUBLE!
THE TASK FORCE FILES ARE GONE TOO!
ANYONE-- REARDEN, TRASK OR SAMUELS-- COULD HAVE STOLEN THEM, AND THERE'S NO CLUE...
...EXCEPT FOR THIS GREASY LIQUID ON THE FOLDER'S SURFACE... I COULD ANALYZE IT IN THE BATCAVE, BUT SOMETHING'S GNAWING AT THE BACK OF MY MIND-- IF I COULD JUST PLACE IT!
IN THE MEANTIME, "OFFICER NELSON" BETTER VISIT COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE, TO SEE IF HIS DUPLICATES OF THE FILES ARE SAFE!
AND IN THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE...
UMPH... THE FILE IS HEAVIER THAN I REMEMBERED...
...GOOD GOD! THOSE WIRES, UNDERNEATH THE LID... SOMEONE'S SUBSTITUTED THE FILES FOR A BOMB!
JARRING IT MAY ALREADY HAVE ACTIVATED IT! NO TIME TO CALL THE BOMB SQUAD-- I'LL HAVE TO DEFUSE IT MYSELF!
COMMISSIONER! I HAVE TO--
BATMAN! I NEED YOUR HELP! THIS IS A BOMB!


YOU DID PICK UP ON MY SLIP, COMMISSIONER-- I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT!
YOUR DISGUISE TALENTS ARE THE LAST THING ON MY MIND NOW, BATMAN--
--YOUR MECHANICAL ABILITIES ARE WHAT I NEED!
JUST KEEP THAT LIGHT STEADY, COMMISSIONER... THAT'S FINE!
WHEN I SAY "GO," YOU TURN THE SCREW CLOCKWISE-- I'LL CUT THE WIRE!
READY, BATMAN!
NOW I'LL SNIP THE DETONATOR SPRING! IF THE BOMB MAKES A CLICK, WE'RE HOME FREE-- IT'S DEFUSED! IF IT MAKES ANY OTHER SOUND...
WE'LL NEVER KNOW IT! GO AHEAD, BATMAN!
SNIP!
CLICK
I'LL GIVE YOU ODDS THAT BOMB HAS REARDEN'S PRINTS ALL OVER IT-- IT LOOKS AS THOUGH HE STOLE YOUR DUPLICATE FILES AND PLANTED THE BOMB!
BLAST IT, BATMAN, I WANT THE MAN WHO DID THIS! IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO REARDEN...
THAT MAKES TWO OF US, COMMISSIONER-- AND I KNOW WHO PLANTED THE BOMB!
MINUTES LATER, IN THE HEADQUARTERS CRIME LAB...
I'D LIKE TO GO OVER MY FILES ON THE CASE WITH YOU...
HUH?

...SAMUELS!
H-HEY, EASY WITH THAT BOX, COMMISSIONER!
WHY, IT'S ONLY MY FILES!
NO--THERE'S A BOMB INSIDE!
THE OIL STAINS ON THE FILE WERE SHOUTING YOUR NAME, SAMUELS--YOU DIDN'T WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER OILING YOUR GUN--BUT WE NEEDED A CONFESSION!
A CONFESSION AND A CAPTURE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS, BATMAN!
BONK
BAM BAM
YOU'RE AN EVEN WORSE SHOT UNDER PRESSURE, SAMUELS... AND I STILL SAY YOU RELY TOO MUCH ON YOUR GUN!
WHERE'S REARDEN--WHERE'S THE MAN YOU BETRAYED?
AND YOU'D BETTER PRAY HE'S NOT HURT!
HE-HE'S OKAY... HONEST!
AND SOON...
SAMUELS KEPT HIM HERE IN THIS APARTMENT THAT HE RENTED UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME--ALL READY FOR DELIVERY WHEN THE FRAME WAS COMPLETE--AS A CORPSE!
HE'S DOPED UP, BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S HURT, GORDON! GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL, JUST TO MAKE SURE!
I'VE ALREADY CALLED AN AMBULANCE!
FINALLY, THE NEXT DAY..
THE DOCTORS SAY I'LL BE FINE, BATMAN--ALL I NEED IS A LITTLE REST AND RELAXATION!
SOUNDS LIKE SOME HUNTING, UPSTATE, IS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED--RIGHT, GORDON?
RIGHT, BATMAN... AND I KNOW JUST THE PLACE!
END

Dear Bat-People,

Just got BATMAN #326 in the mail and when I read that Len Wein is going to leave this comic, I was really shocked! Len has given his all to make this comic as good as it is and it is a completely foolish move that he is making. Len has brought me much enjoyment via his scripting of the Batman. I'm sure that Marv Wolfman will do a perfect job, but what about all of the sub-plots Len gave us? Will they ever be resolved? Please have Marv Wolfman resolve them.

Well, as for the issue, it was okay. What I did like was the art and the villain, Professor Milo. What I didn't like was that Selina Kyle left (Maybe Marv could return Silver St. Cloud and get her and Bruce back together again.). She was a really dynamic supporting character. Please, do not have her become an evil Catwoman. Have her become a good one.

I also would like to say that I am in sharp disagreement with your back-up spot appearing in your next issue and in your following issues. We readers see Robin in Detective and in Super-Friends in which he does appear regularly with Batman. I would rather see this spot filled by Black Lightning and have Man-Bat take over his spot in Detective. Please, consider it.

Matt Kurtz
Address Withheld

With DETECTIVE shrinking to standard format, Robin's solo adventures will be moving here on a regular basis starting sometime in the near future—though by a different team than the one handling his run in DETEC. In the meantime, however, we have several special stories that are "extensions" or other aspects of the main stories in progress. We think you'll find them a real treat.—PL.

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Batman #326 was dull, dull, boring, and tedious! with a capital y for yawn.

The story was slow moving and was obviously just a set-up for the issues to come. Another thing that disturbed me was the return of the dreaded Prof. Milo. I liked him when Lively Len teamed with Neal Adams to produce the story of Anthony Lupos, everybody's favorite wolf man, but I liked the way Len killed him off. I'm beginning to think that Mr. Wein is merely trying to have one last "hoorah" before leaving the fate of the Batman to the tender mercies of Marv Wolfman.

The art was, as usual, CRUDDY, SKETCHY, and SLOPPY!!! Novick is a fair penciller, but he needs an inker like Dick Giordano to change his work from the pits to the ritz so to speak.

Take McLaughlin out in the desert somewhere and chain him to a cactus.

I'm really sorry to hear that Len is leaving, I think that Len's like of The Batman contributed a lot to his stories so that the book wasn't just an assignment, but fun for him as well.

Bye Len.

—John Hebert

The debate about Batman inkers rages on—in our office as well as in letters. Most agree that Giordano is the ideal (but unfortunately unavailable) first choice, but the fans of McLaughlin, Smith and Mitchell are waging war over their favorites. Anyone out there care to add his or her vote?—PL.

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Professor Milo didn't look any the worse for wear after his savage mauling by the werewolf in BATMAN #255 and should provide plenty of peril for the Caped Crusader next issue, if Joe Kubert's chilling cover is an apt indication, but what does the future hold for Catwoman?

Marriage to Bruce Wayne is too pedestrian to prove interesting, and I have no delusions of her becoming Batman's crime-fighting partner, so that leaves her further vilification up to you, Paul, and neo-Bat-scripter, Marv Wolfman.

Speaking of villains, I want to see the returns of Signalman, Killer Moth, the Cavalier, and Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset St.
Scranton, Pa. 18509

Catwoman returns in our very next issue—in a solo story as well as in our lead feature. But as to whether her motives are pure or villainous, we wouldn't presume to say (she might change her mind by then!).—PL.

* * * * *

Dear Paul:

The cover of *Batman* #326 was very cluttered with ugly blurbs reading "THIS MAN IS TRYING TO KILL BATMAN (obvious)—", "—AND THIS MAN IS CONTROLLING THE WHOLE PLAN FROM THE UNLIKELIEST HQ OF ALL!" (not particularly relevant. Why was that bozo on the cover at all? He was part of the clutter.), and "Crimes By Remote Control!" (the only one I would have in any way sanctioned.) Nice try, Jim. I guess you did your job.

I said it before and I'll say it again: I like Mitchell better than McLaughlin, and I like Smith better than either. Incidentally, have you thought of trying Dan Adkins or Kurt Schaffenberger?

"This Way Lies Madness!" was not a bad issue. It contained no major battle, but this did not seem to hurt. In fact, it helped. The end of the Bruce/Selina relationship was rather inevitable. As far as I could see, they never had that much going to begin with. That's obvious with Bruce too, not quite as upset over Selina as he was over Silver St. Cloud. And where is the lovely Ms. Cloud these days? I'll be interested to see what Marv Wolfman does for Bruce's love life. You don't think Caroline Crown has a thing for Brucie, do ya?

Wherever the asylum plot is going, I like it. Taylor will provide an interesting diversion next issue. Say, I can't begin to tell you how pleased I am that Milo is back! His last appearance was in #255, and I was there! We had all assumed the werewolf killed Milo, but I realize now that this was never actually shown. I wish Len could stay around long enough to resurrect Sterling Silversmith. Ah, me.

As noted, I can't wait to see what's in store for Batman with Marv Wolfman at the helm. Batman is a saga not unlike Dracula in mood or passion. The secret of Marv's Dracula was long-range development of plots and countless minor characters. I hope he is planning the same method here.

Steve Gawzonski
330 Friar Tuck Drive
Schererville, Ind. 46375

Long range developments have already begun, Steve, even if they aren't obvious—and a four part epic starts in #332.—PL.

* * * * *

NEXT MONTH: "Fallout"...the beginning of The Lazarus Affair, a twisting turning tale that will take our cast across the globe, and explain a series of events that have been unfolding in this magazine for a decade. Be here! –Paul Levitz

* * * * *

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